

DRY GULCH TIMBER SALE

June 18, 2007 Land Board

Location of Sale:

- Missoula Unit (SWLO) – Approximately 30 air miles east of Missoula, Montana
- Granite County – Section 36, T12N, R15W and Section 2, T11N, R15W
- 100% Common School Trust.

Sale Volume & Estimated Value:

- The estimated volume is 25,307 tons (3,593 MBF) with an estimated minimum value of \$404,966.00 or \$16.00/ton.
- In addition to the stumpage value, a fee of \$2.31/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 7.04 tons/MBF is the estimated conversion factor.

Sale & Harvest Treatments:

- The sale contains 17 harvest units totaling 452 acres.
- A combination of commercial thinning and shelterwood treatments would be applied to reduce stocking, improve vigor, and to promote regeneration where growth has declined or where Douglas-fir beetle or mountain pine beetle mortality is occurring.
- Planned harvest prescriptions would emulate natural disturbances such as a mixed intensity fire and would address ongoing Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle mortality. Harvest treatments are designed to promote structural diversity within harvested stands.
- No old growth stands would be harvested.

Harvest System:

- 40% skyline
- 60% tractor

Road Construction:

- Approximately 3.0 miles of new road would be constructed on trust lands and 0.20 miles of new road constructed on Stimson Lumber Company land. Approximately 15 miles of road would be maintained across other ownerships of which approximately 6.5 miles are non-maintained county road. Motorized access is restricted (gated within 1 mile of Section 36) to the DNRC Sections which are part of a "walk-in hunting area". Existing roads included in the project would be upgraded to meet current BMP's.

Public Involvement & Issues:

- Comments from the general public, interest groups, and agency specialists were solicited in September of 2002. A notice was published in the *Missoulian* on September 10, 17, and 24, 2002. Additionally, comments were solicited for the Gambler Gulch and Packer Gulch Sections in June of 2004. A notice was published in the *Missoulian* for this project on June 27, July 4, 11 and 18 of 2004. Scoping notices were mailed to 55 individuals and or organizations. Written comments were received from the following organizations: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and The Ecology Center. In order to

properly address cumulative effects for these two projects it was decided by the Interdisciplinary Team to combine the effects analyses.

Issues and Mitigations:

- **Wildlife-** Contract stipulations would state that should Threatened and Endangered species be encountered within the Sale area, activities would cease until a review was completed by the DNRC biologist. A Grizzly bear was observed by Mike McGrath/ DNRC Biologist in Section 36.
- Due to four known hawk nests (goshawk and Cooper's Hawk) within harvest areas in both sections, mechanized activities would be restricted on all but approximately 95 acres in Section 36 during the period from April 1 through August 31 for a 1/4-mile horizontal radius buffer.
- Monitoring of caves in Section 2 (Baldy Sink: 40 feet wide by 50 feet deep; and another 25 feet wide and 30 feet deep) occurred in the summer of 2005 to determine the type of use and affected bat species. Monitoring efforts with DNRC wildlife biologists and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks personnel indicated extensive use of Baldy Sink as a day roost and feeding site for several bat species. Electronic recording at the entrance produced several thousand records over 2 weeks' time. One night's trapping efforts yielded 12 bats representing 6 species that did not include the Townsend's Big-eared bat. The measures incorporated into the contract and harvest plan for the protection of hawk nests would encapsulate both caves and provide a 500-foot radius buffer around each cave.
- Approximately 158 acres of primarily mixed conifer stands within Section 36 would retain approximately 40% crown cover for Lynx habitat.

The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Dry Gulch Timber Sale.

Attachment A



